

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6224  
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PDIP, SU  
SUBJECT: FESTIVITIES IN DONGOLA

1. SUDANESE  
CELEBRATION OF TWENTY-SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF  
INDEPENDENCE, ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY,  
WAS POSTPONED 48 HOURS BECAUSE OF DEATH OF RULER OF  
KUWAIT.

2. ACCORDINGLY, MY WIFE AND I, TOGETHER WITH LARGE  
NUMBER OF OTHER DIPLOMATS, SUDANGOV OFFICIALS, ET AL,  
WERE FLOWN TO DONGOLA IN THE AFTERNOON OF JANUARY 2.  
UPON ARRIVAL WE WERE TAKEN TO OUR LODGINGS WHICH  
CONSISTED OF A NUMBER OF RIVER STEAMERS ANCHORED NEAR  
THE CITY. LODGINGS WERE REASONABLY COMFORTABLE  
EXCEPT FOR PLUMBING WHICH WAS MEDIEVAL. FOOD  
THROUGHOUT STAY WAS TYPICALLY SUDANESE, E.G. STONE  
COLD FRIED FISH BEING CENTERPIECE OF BREAKFAST. UNFORTUNATELY,  
A STRONG WIND FROM THE NORTH (SHAMAAL) BLEW THROUGHOUT  
OUR SOJOURN IN DONGOLA RAISING BITING CLOUDS OF SAND. THIS  
HAMPERED CEREMONIES SOMEWHAT BUT DID NOT STIFLE THE  
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ENTHUSIASM OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE. IT WAS BITTER, BONE-CHILLING  
COLD BUT WE CARRIED MANY LAYERS OF WARM GARMENTS AND  
EXTRA BLANKETS.

3. CEREMONIES OPENED EARLY MORNING JANUARY 3 WITH  
ARRIVAL BY AIR OF PRESIDENT NIMEIRI. AS AN ADDED BONUS  
HE HAD SOMALI PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE WITH HIM. ETHIOPIAN

AMBASSADOR DISPLAYED MARVELOUS FOOTWORK STEPPING BEHIND WHEN BARRE CAME DOWN THE LINE BUT POPPING OUT AGAIN JUST IN TIME TO SHAKE HANDS WITH NIMEIRI. BARRE ACCOMPANIED NIMEIRI TO MORNING CEREMONIES AND LEFT SHORTLY AFTER LUNCH. HE MADE NO SPEECHES.

4. MORNING CEREMONIES FEATURED A RATHER ROUTINE SPEECH BY PRESIDENT NIMEIRI FOLLOWED BY A PARADE WHICH FEATURED FLOATS DEPICTING HISTORY OF DONGOLA REGION SINCE PHARAONIC TIMES. DURING PLANNING OF DONGOLA FESTIVITIES, IT WAS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED THAT EGYPTIAN CABINET MEMBERS OF EGYPTIAN-SUDANESE INTEGRATION COMMISSION WOULD BE PRESENT. THIS DID NOT PAN OUT, HOWEVER, WHICH WAS PROBABLY A GOOD THING. FLOATS PORTRAYING CONQUEST OF SUDAN BY MUHAMMAD ALI AND RECONQUEST, AFTER MAHDIYYA, BY ANGLO-EGYPTIAN FORCES BOTH SHOWED SUDAN AS LANGUISHTQG IN PRISON. AFTER FLOATS THERE WAS A GREAT PARADE OF VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF LOCAL SOCIETY, WORKERS, FARMERS, "CAPITALISTS", ETC. TWO LARGE TRUCKS WENT BY CARRYING CONVICTS BEARING ROADBUILDING TOOLS AND LARGE PAVING BLOCKS. THERE WAS A TOUCH OF COMEDY WHEN THEY LAUGHINGLY THREATENED TO HEAVE THE ROCKS IN THE PRESIDENT'S DIRECTION. HE WENT ALONG WITH THE JOKE BY DUCKING BEHIND THE DIAS.

5. IN THE AFTERNOON THERE WAS A BEAUTIFULLY ORGANIZED GYMNASTICS EXHIBIT AT DONGOLA'S NEW SPORTS ARENA. ABOUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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5,000 YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE DISTRICT PARTICIPATED. ANOTHER FEATURE WAS A WELL-DIRECTED FLASH CARD EXHIBITION FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STADIUM. THEY PRESENTED AT LEAST THIRTY DIFFERENT TABLEAUX WITH GREAT PRECISION.

6. THAT EVENING WE WENT TO THE NEW OPEN AIR THEATRE FOR WHAT WAS TO HAVE BEEN A THREE-HOUR VARIETY SHOW. AFTER FIRST HOUR, HOWEVER, FREEZING DIPLOMATS BEGGED LEAVE TO WITHDRAW WHICH PRESIDENT GRACIOUSLY ACCORDED.

7. NEXT MORNING, JANUARY 4, WAS TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN UP WITH OPENING OF LOCAL FAIR, INAUGURATION OF SATELLITE STATION AND OTHER NEW PUBLIC FACILITIES. WINDS HAD WHIPPED UP SO MUCH SAND, HOWEVER, THAT PROGRAMS WERE CANCELLED. THERE WAS CONCERN THAT AIRPORT WOULD HAVE TO BE CLOSED BY MID-AFTERNOON, SO WE WERE HUSTLED ABOARD AIRCRAFT AT 12:30 P.M. (TWO AND A HALF HOURS EARLIER THAN SCHEDULED) AND FLOWN BACK TO KHARTOUM. THE OLD TOWN WAS PRETTY GOOD TO COME BACK TO.  
BERGUS

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